United Nations CRC/C/OPAC/JOR/CO/1

Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the report submitted by Jordan under article 8, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Jordan (CRC/C/OPAC/JOR/1) at its 1879th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1879), held on 27 May 2013, and adopted at its 1901st meeting, held on 13 June 2014, the following concluding observations.

I. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report and its written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/OPAC/JOR/Q/1/Add.1). The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the multisectoral delegation of the State party.

3. The Committee reminds the State party that the present concluding observations should be read in conjunction with the concluding observations on the State party's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/JOR/CO/4-5) and on the initial report under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/JOR/CO/1), adopted on 13 June 2014.

II. General observations

Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the various positive measures taken in areas relevant to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, and in particular welcomes:

(a) The tremendous efforts of the State party to accommodate thousands of Syrian refugees, including children, on its territory and to enable them to have access to many public services for free or at a minimal cost;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-sixth session (26 May–13 June 2014).

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(b) The fact that Jordan is the first country in the Middle East to meet the deadline set by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and that it declared itself free of landmines in 2012;

(c) The global initiative Generations for Peace, launched in 2007 by Prince Feisal bin al-Hussein of Jordan, the objective of which is to train youth leaders from around the world to use sport as a way of bringing together people in communities experiencing conflict.

III. General measures of implementation

Coordination

5. While noting that the Ministry of Defence is mainly responsible for the implementation of the Optional Protocol and that the Ministry of the Interior also bears some responsibility in that respect, the Committee is concerned by the absence of a body mandated to coordinate a comprehensive and effective implementation of the Optional Protocol throughout the State.

6. **The Committee urges the State party to designate the governmental entity with overall responsibility for the implementation of the Optional Protocol and to put in place an institutional mechanism for effective coordination among ministries and other government entities and partners with respect to the implementation of the Optional Protocol.**

Allocation of resources

7. While noting that the State party spends considerable resources to provide assistance to refugees, the Committee regrets that no information is available on the budgetary allocations for the implementation of the Optional Protocol.

8. **The Committee recommends that the State party specifically earmark sufficient budget resources for the implementation of the Optional Protocol.**

Dissemination and awareness-raising

9. While noting that the Optional Protocol was published in the official gazette and circulated to stakeholders specialized in the areas covered by the Optional Protocol, the Committee regrets that insufficient measures have been taken to raise awareness of the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol, and in particular about reporting mechanisms and dangers that might lead children to fall victim to the offences covered by the Optional Protocol, as recognized by the State party itself.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol are widely disseminated among the general public, children and their families.**

Training

11. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to develop training programmes for its Armed Forces and police and to promote awareness of human rights and international humanitarian law in its security forces. The Committee is, however, concerned that other relevant professional categories do not receive adequate training on the provisions of the Optional Protocol

12. **The Committee recommends that training on the provisions of the Optional Protocol be provided for professionals dealing with children, in particular teachers, migration authorities, members of international peacekeeping forces, police, lawyers, judges, medical professionals, social workers and journalists.**

Data

13. In view of the large number of child refugees present in the State party coming from countries affected by armed conflicts, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a central data collection system to identify and register all refugee children within the jurisdiction of the State party who may have been recruited or used in hostilities abroad.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party establish a central data collection system to identify and register all children within its jurisdiction who may have been recruited or used in hostilities abroad. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that data on refugee and asylum-seeking children who have been victims of such practices are properly collected. All data should be disaggregated by, inter alia, sex, age, nationality, ethnic origin and socioeconomic background, as well as by the time frame of the use of the child.**

IV. Prevention

Voluntary recruitment

15. The Committee takes note that there are no volunteers in the Armed Forces of the State party. The Committee, however, expresses concern that, under article 12/2 of the Public Security Act, the recruitment of public security officers is authorized for those above 17 years of age.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party review and raise the age for voluntary recruitment of public security officers to 18 years in order to promote and strengthen the protection of children through an overall higher legal standard.**

Human rights and peace education

17. The Committee welcomes the initiatives undertaken by the State party as regards the inclusion of peace education and notions of international humanitarian law in school curricula. However, the Committee regrets that human rights and peace education, as well as knowledge on the Optional Protocol, is not specifically incorporated as a mandatory part of the primary and secondary school curricula and in the teacher-training programme.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party include mandatory human rights and peace education in the curricula of all schools, including military schools, with special reference to the Optional Protocol.**

V. Prohibition and related matters

Criminal legislation and regulations in force

19. While noting that the call-up for national service has been suspended until further notice, the Committee expresses concern about the discrepancy between the different minimum ages for compulsory recruitment into the armed forces as contained in the legislation of the State party, which vary from 15 to 18 years old. The Committee is also concerned that the recruitment and use of children in hostilities by the armed forces and non-State armed groups and the recruitment and use of children by private security

companies have still not been explicitly prohibited and criminalized. The Committee is further concerned that, while Jordan is a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, recruitment of children below the age of 15 is still not defined as a war crime in the State party's legislation.

20. **The Committee urges the State party to undertake a comprehensive review of its legislation in order to fully harmonize it with the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol and, in particular:**

(a) Explicitly prohibit and criminalize the recruitment and use of children under 18 years of age in hostilities by the armed forces and non-State armed groups and the recruitment and use of children by security companies;

(b) Ensure that the crime of unlawful recruitment of children by the armed forces and armed groups applies in both peacetime and wartime;

(c) Define and punish the recruitment of children under the age of 15 as a war crime;

(d) Ensure that domestic regulatory legislation on the oversight and accountability of private military and security companies is adopted and implemented.

Recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups

21. The Committee expresses serious concern that Syrian refugee children are reportedly being recruited in the State party's refugee camps by Syrian armed groups and used in both combat and support roles.

22. **The Committee urges the State party to establish effective measures in cooperation with relevant international organizations to protect children from being recruited and sent to neighbouring countries for use in armed conflict. To that end, the State party should organize awareness-raising campaigns about the situation of children involved in armed conflict, and increase its efforts to provide appropriate educational and recreational activities for adolescents living in refugee camps as a way to effectively prevent their recruitment by armed groups.**

Extraterritorial jurisdiction

23. The Committee recommends that the State party consider establishing and exercising extraterritorial jurisdiction over all offences under the Optional Protocol, taking into account also the relevant international instruments to which it is a party, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Extradition

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party remove the requirement of double criminality for extradition for offences under the Optional Protocol, and ensure that offences under the Optional Protocol are fully incorporated into all of its relevant bilateral treaties and procedures.**

VI. Protection, recovery and reintegration

Measures adopted to protect the rights of child victims

25. The Committee expresses concern about the numerous cases of refoulement and deportation of Palestinians families and children fleeing the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past three years.

26. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure the full protection of Palestinian children and their families fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic, and to ensure full respect for the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, including non-rejection at frontiers. The State party should ensure full access by all refugee and asylum-seeking children and their families to fair and effective procedures for determining status, without discrimination.**

Assistance for physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

27. While acknowledging the massive amount of assistance provided by the State party to Syrian refugee children, the Committee is seriously concerned that insufficient attention has been paid to the early identification of refugee and asylum-seeking children who may have been involved in conflict or subject to conflict-related trauma. The Committee is also concerned that Syrian children who are suffering profound distress and sensory, intellectual or mental health disabilities after experiencing and witnessing war-related violence and affliction in the Syrian Arab Republic have had limited access to assistance for their physical and psychological recovery.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party provide systematic training on the early identification of children who may have been involved in conflict or affected by it to all professionals working with or for children, particularly border control and immigration personnel, the military, education professionals and medical professionals. The State party should also strengthen the assistance and support provided to refugee and asylum-seeking children who may have been involved in conflict or subject to conflict-related trauma and displacement and provide them with special support and assistance by, inter alia, seeking assistance from international partners and agencies in establishing programmes for their physical and psychological recovery.**

VII. International assistance and cooperation

International cooperation

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue and strengthen its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and that it explore the possibility of increasing cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations entities in the implementation of the Optional Protocol**

VIII. Follow-up and dissemination

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure the full implementation of the present recommendations by, inter alia, transmitting them to the Parliament, relevant ministries, including the Ministry of**

Defence, the Supreme Court and local authorities, for appropriate consideration and further action.

31. **The Committee recommends that the initial report and written replies submitted by the State party and the related concluding observations adopted by the Committee be made widely available, including through the Internet, to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate on and awareness of the Optional Protocol, and its implementation and monitoring.**

IX. Next report

32. **In accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and the present concluding observations in the next periodic report, to be submitted in accordance with article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**